

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSC-01 IO-13 /078 W
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R 220453Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 199
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 18405

E.O. 11762: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN
SUBJ: NEW INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO NEW ZEALAND

REF: VIENTIANE 2913

1. BAGLODI DEVA RAO, FORMERLY INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO LAOS, HAS BEEN APPOINTED INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO NEW ZEALAND, WHERE HE SUCCEEDS LAKSHMI NARAYAN RAY. ACCORDING TO REFTEL, RAO PROCEEDED FROM VIENTIANE ON 15 DECEMBER EN ROUTE TO WELLINGTON.

2. RAO WAS BORN 28 FEBRUARY 1927 IN THE PORT CITY OF MANGALORE IN MYSORE STATE (NOW CALLED KARNATAKA). HE HOLDS AN M.A. IN ENGLISH FROM MADRAS. AND SERVED AS A LECTURER AT LOCAL COLLEGES IN KARNATAKA. RAO JOINED THE INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1949 AND HAS HAD LANGUAGE TRAINING IN MOSCOW; HE WAS UNDER AND THEN DEPUTY SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FROM 1956 TO 1959. HIS
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NEXT POSTS WERE AS FIRST SECRETARY IN ROME AND LAGOS (1959-65); AND FOR THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS OF 1965 HE WAS DIRECTOR OF THE PAKISTAN DIVISION IN THE MEA. AFTER A YEAR ON DEPUTATION TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE, HE WAS NAMED CONSUELLOR IN KATHMANDU IN LATE 1966, AND IN 1969 HE WAS ELEVATED TO MINISTER. HE WAS AMBASSADOR IN

MANILA FROM 1970-73, AND IN VIENTIANE FROM 1973.

3. EMBOFF HERE KNEW RAO IN KATHMANDU AND CONFIRMS HIS DISTINCT MANNERISMS ALLUDED TO IN THE REFTEL-SPEAKING WITH HIS HAND IN FRONT OF HIS MOUTH AND LOOKING UPWARD WITH NEARLY-CLOSED EYES DURING CONVERSATION. OUR OFFICER STATES THAT TAO'S BEHAVIOR IN KATHMANDU WAS ARGUMENTATIVE AND EVEN PROVOCATIVE (OUR SOURCE ATTRIBUTES THIS BEHAVIOR, AT LEAST IN PART, TO AN ATTEMPT ON RAO'S PART TO COMPENSATE FOR HIS VERY SHORT STATURE). IN KATHMANDU, WHERE HE SERVED UNDER AMBASSADOR RAJ BAHADUR-

NOW MINISTER FOR TOURISM-RAO WAS AGGRESSIVELY ANTI-AMERICAN AND WAS NOT ABOVE SUCH TACTIC AS STARTING RUMORS TO THE EFFECT THAT AID'S NEPALESE PROGRAM WAS REALLY A FRONT FOR COVERT ACTION AGAINST INDIA. EMBOFF BELIEVES THERE WERE REPORTS OF SIMILAR BEHAVIOR ON RAO'S PART IN MANILA, BUT WE WERE UNABLE TO LOCATE THEM IN EMBASSY FILES. WE SUGGEST THAT WELLINGTON KEEP NEW DELHI APPRISED OF ANY ANTI-AMERICANISM BY RAO IN NEW ZEALAND.

4. RAO'S WIFE, VIJAYA LAKSHMI RAO, IS, BY ALL ACCOUNTS, MUSH MORE GENTLE AND PLEASANT THAN HE, ALMOST AS IF SHE WERE TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR HER HUSBAND'S PUGNACITY. THE COUPLE HAVE ONE SON. SCHNEIDER

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